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ARTICLES:

- (1) Futenma relocation to be implemented, based on government plan, Okinawa governor, JDA Director General Nukaga agree; Five-point confirmation document signed; Conditions include elimination of dangers

ASAHI (Top Play) (Excerpts)
May 11, 2006

Defense Agency (JDA) Director General Nukaga and Okinawa Governor Inamine met today at the JDA to discuss the issue of relocating Futenma Air Station in Okinawa. During the meeting they agreed to the relocation of Futenma's functions to Henoko Point, Nago City, based on the latest government plan. Both signed a confirmation document, which included a condition that the dangers of Futenma Air Station should be eliminated. Inamine had been opposed to the government plan, but a senior government official today noted, "We see the agreement as Okinawa Prefecture having in effect agreed on the government plan." Following the agreement reached today, the government will aim to have a final agreement on USFJ realignment adopted by the cabinet. The relocation of Futenma functions will now start based on the government plan.

In connection with this development, Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe this morning told a news conference that coordination is underway for Prime Minister Koizumi to meet with Inamine today.

The basic confirmation document, which Nukaga and Inamine exchanged, covers five points. The document stipulates that the JDA and Okinawa Prefecture are to relocate Futenma functions to Henoko Point, based on the government plan, while being mindful of the following factors: (1) the elimination of the dangers of the Futenma Air Station; (2) the safety of nearby residents; (3) the preservation of the natural environment and (4) feasibility of the plan. It also noted that the JDA, the prefecture and other related local municipalities would regularly and sincerely

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discuss the relocation plan.

Nukaga and Inamine held a joint press conference after the meeting. During the press conference, Inamine said: "The removal of the dangers of Futenma Air Station has been Okinawa's long-standing top agenda item. We have now taken a step forward for an early settlement of this issue." Asked whether he had agreed on the government plan, he simply said: "That is not the case at all. I will talk (to the government regarding such issues as the removal of dangers) to the new site." In that process, I will make efforts to reflect the prefecture's view in the plan."

Outline of basic confirmation document signed between JDA and Okinawa Prefecture

1. The relocation plan is to be carried out in a manner of maintaining a balance between the maintaining of the deterrent capability of US forces in Japan and the reduction of burden on Okinawa.

2. The relocation plan is to be carried, based on the government plan, while being mindful of (1) the removal of the dangers of Futenma Air Station; (2) the safety of nearby residents; (3) the preservation of the natural environment; and (4) the feasibility of the relocation project.

3. The JDA, Okinawa Prefecture, Nago City and other related municipalities are to regularly discuss the plan to construct replacement facilities, based on this confirmation document.

4. The government is to discuss the specifics of a final agreement on USFJ realignment with Okinawa Prefecture, Nago City, and other related municipalities in advance when it has it adopted by the cabinet.

5. The government will look into measures to further improve the operation of the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement.

(2) Okinawa Governor: To say I accepted (the Futenma relocation plan) is completely wrong

ASAHI (Page 14) (Full)

Evening, May 11, 2006

The face of the JDA chief was beaming, but that of Okinawa Governor Keiichi Inamine was rigid. The governor kept repeating over and over: "(To say that I accepted it) is completely wrong." The two agreed to basically continue talks on the government's plan to build two runways in a V shape at Henoko Point in the city of Nago, Okinawa Prefecture. Afterward, the two met the press corps with totally different countenances.

When the press corps asked him if the prefecture, too, had agreed (to the central government's plan), Governor Inamine strongly denied it, using such expressions as, "That's completely wrong," or, "If nothing happens, talks will not go forward," or, "In any case, (the government's plan) is just the threshold." Asked about the proposal he made on May 4 for a temporary heliport, as well, the governor made it clear he would continue to advocate such a plan in the future.

(3) Logjam of important bills in Lower House one month before Diet session ends

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ASAHI (Page 4) (Abridged)
May 11, 2006

With an end to the current Diet session approaching, many important bills are still stuck in the Lower House. Some senior Upper House lawmakers have begun calling on the ruling coalition to railroad the remaining bills through the Lower House. In a bid to break the logjam in the Lower House, Diet affairs chiefs of the ruling and opposition parties met for the first time yesterday since Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) installed its new leadership.

There is only about a month left before the current Diet session adjourns on June 18. Following the meeting of Diet affairs chairs yesterday, bright prospects emerged for at least the medical reform-related bills to clear the Lower House. The ruling and opposition blocs have also decided to begin deliberations on a bill amending the Basic Education Law next week.

Despite that, a senior ruling party member said depressingly, "The term of the Diet session is fixed, and there still remain so many bills. We may have to handle them in the order of importance."

A New Komeito member also complained, "Many government offices produced tough bills to get them approved while the highly popular Prime Minister Koizumi is in office."

But doubts are rising about the presentation to the Diet of a national referendum bill on amending the Constitution, which is top priority for the ruling camp, along with a bill amending the Basic Education Law. Minshuto President Ichiro Ozawa rejected jointly sponsoring the bill with the Liberal Democratic Party and New Komeito.

Chances are also slim for the Basic Education Law revision bill to clear the Diet without an extension of the current session. The Diet affairs chiefs of the ruling and opposition camps also decided to forgo an early vote on the bill amending the Organized Crime Punishment Law that would make conspiracy a crime.

A delay in passing bills by the ruling coalition, which hold a two-thirds of the Lower House seats, is taking its toll on the Upper House. Mikio Aoki, who heads the LDP caucus in the Upper House, urged in the May 9 party executive meeting his Lower House colleagues to ram important bills through the Diet by taking advantage of their numerical superiority.

But the Diet affairs chiefs of the ruling coalition opted to find a breakthrough through talks so as not to be criticized as arrogant. Minshuto is determined to boycott Diet deliberations altogether if the ruling coalition forcibly passes even one bill.

The ruling bloc fears a major upset in the management of Diet affairs at its closing stage.

Opposition camp bullish owing to "Ozawa effects"

Following the talks with his ruling party counterparts, Minshuto Diet affairs chief Kozo Watanabe commented confidently last night:

"We were lucky that the ruling coalition agreed not to take a

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Lower House vote on conspiracy legislation until after the Golden Week holidays. I'll bet that (LDP Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Hiroyuki) Hosoda will be again blamed by Upper House members."

Minshuto is increasingly upbeat under Ozawa, who has pushed up the party's support ratings. Ozawa has taken a clear adversarial stand against the ruling coalition.

Ozawa warned the huge ruling coalition in a press conference May 9: "Armed with a two-thirds of the Lower House seats, it is certain that (the ruling camp) can ram (any bill) through the chamber. But the consequence is always followed by a judgment by the people as sovereign."

On May 9, Minshuto executives determined that their party would fight tooth and nail to block conspiracy legislation and pursue the government's accountability for US force realignment in the remaining Diet session. Ozawa also noted that afternoon, "We will continue questioning the government's position severely."

He also said regarding US force realignment, "The prime minister's relationship with the United States has turned Japan into a country that is a far cry from being a true US ally." Ozawa intends to take up the issue in his one-on-one debate with Koizumi, expected to occur later this month.

Ozawa's rejection to jointly present a national referendum bill epitomizes his antagonistic stance toward the ruling coalition. Minshuto is now focused on highlighting the highhandedness of the ruling coalition in the remaining Diet session.

(4) Editorial - Keizai Doyukai 's proposals could help China interfere even more in Japan's internal affairs

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
May 11, 2006

In a recent report, the Japan Association of Corporate Executives (Keizai Doyukai) suggested that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi should desist from paying homage at Yasukuni Shrine in order to repair the current strained relations with China, noting, "It is advisable for the prime minister to reconsider visiting the shrine." Why did it offer such advice at this point? The suggestion has baffled us.

In late March, Chinese President Hu Jintao met with a Japanese delegation led by former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto that was visiting China. The delegation consisted of leaders of Japan-China friendship organizations. Hu told the delegates: "We are ready to hold a summit meeting with Japan if its leader stops visiting Yasukuni Shrine, which enshrines 'Class A war criminals.'" The implication of his remark is a warning to Koizumi's successor, who will be elected in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) presidential election set for this fall. South Korea, as well, has refused to hold summit talks with Japan for the same reason.

Even some Japanese lawmakers are trying to link the Yasukuni issue to East Asian diplomacy in order to bring it to center stage in the campaign for the LDP presidential seat. As if to coincide with this move, Keizai Doyukai suggested Koizumi should refrain from visiting the shrine. This will only further encourage China and other countries to meddle even more in

Japan's internal affairs.

Keizai Doyukai also has proposed erecting a national memorial monument as an alternative facility for Yasukuni Shrine. This proposal appears to comply with the requests by China and South Korea, but the Japanese public has yet to form a consensus on the matter.

During the staff meeting of the Doyukai, objections were raised against the suggestion, such as, "We should not issue such a proposal at this point," and, "We should not urge (the prime minister) to reconsider his visits to Yasukuni Shrine." Of the some 70 attendees, 11 were reportedly opposed to offering such a suggestion. We hope Keizai Doyukai will reveal what sorts of opposing views were expressed.

Prime Minister Koizumi commented: "I have been (until now) asked by business leaders not to 'visit the shrine,' but I have definitely told them, 'Business and politics are two separate matters.'" Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, too, remarked: "All the prime minister has said is everything I want to say." We offer our endorsement to the government's consistent attitude.

The report states: "Words and deeds that cause China and other Asian nations to entertain doubts (about Japan) could bring about a rejection of postwar Japan as a whole and would not serve Japan's national interests." But isn't it true that giving undue consideration for our neighbors has already put Japan's diplomacy on the wrong track after the end of the war? Japan instead needs to have a foreign policy of saying what it must say even though China and other nations harbor doubts.

Paying homage at Yasukuni Shrine is part of Japanese culture and it is a matter of hearts of the Japanese people. We hope to see an environment created for Japanese people to be able to do so without causing any interference, whatever intention they may have in doing so.

(5) Editorial - Keizai Doyukai's suggestion: Business circles also concerned about prime minister's Yasukuni Shrine visits

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)
May 11, 2006

The Japan Association of Corporate Executives (Keizai Doyukai), known as an active policy proponent among economic organizations, recently offered a proposal for the future of Japan-China relations urging the prime minister to reconsider his visits to Yasukuni Shrine.

According to the proposal, Keizai Doyukai suggests that the prime minister, following Japan's own judgment, should abstain from visiting the shrine, and that Japan should erect a memorial monument where people can renew the pledge never to fight a war again. We are sympathetic to the proposal.

In dealing with the Yasukuni issue, Yotaro Kobayashi, former chairman of Keizai Doyukai and the top advisor of Fuji Xerox Co., Ltd., was threatened by someone in such ways as the explosion of fire bombs on the porch of his residence. The attack was allegedly triggered by his remark he made as Japan's chair of the New Japan-China Friendship Committee for the 21st Century about the prime minister's shrine visit. The remark was: "Personally, I

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hope he will stop visiting it."

Some in business circles are reluctant to say anything about the Yasukuni issue. But IBM Japan Chairman Kakutaro Kitashiro, now chairman of Keizai Doyukai who succeeded Yotaro Kobayashi, did not shy away from the issue and put together his ideas into a proposal. In this regard, we respect him.

With the continued expansion of economic exchanges between Japan and China, China has been the largest trade partner for Japan in trade value since 2004. Economic ties between the two countries are not bad: portrayed as being chilly on the political front but being hot on the economic front.

The reason why Keizai Doyukai nonetheless ventured to take up the Yasukuni issue is because of its sense of alarm that the chilly relationship in the political area will sooner or later have a negative effect on economic affairs and trade between the two nations.

The proposal also points out the need for Japan to have a basic strategy of fostering a good relationship with China, seeing relations with China in the broad context of Japan's safety and prosperity and the East Asian region's progress.

Some in Keizai Doyukai took the position that "Given that Prime Minister Koizumi will step down soon, it is unnecessary to offer a suggestion on the Yasukuni issue." But others reportedly overcame objections and adopted the proposal, saying: "We urge the successor to Mr. Koizumi to follow our suggestion." The proposal is likely to affect also the Liberal Democratic Party presidential race to determine who will succeed Koizumi.

Prime Minister Koizumi's reaction to the proposal is something that we can't understand. He commented: "I have been asked by a number of business leaders not to visit (Yasukuni Shrine), and their request came perhaps for their concerns about their business, but I have told them firmly that I won't accept your request because business and politics are two different things." Koizumi's attitude - as if to say that the proposal is calculated and is based on the desire for immediate gains - is nothing more than being rude.

Koizumi has has invited business leaders to government councils deciding government policies to become their members, for instance, the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy. He has done so presumably out of his desire to make the best use of ideas and leadership capabilities fostered in actual business experiences. But he brushes aside a proposal that hits home with him by saying " it only concerns business." This attitude is unreasonable.

Needless to say, economic interests are only part of national interests. But politicians should remember that it is their job to support economic progress and strive to remove obstacles to economic progress.

Keizai Doyukai's proposal this time has a wide variety of ideas, such as concluding a free trade agreement between Japan and China, joint energy development, and sports and cultural exchanges. Both the governments should listen to the proposal with sincerity.

(6) "Morse Target" losing its significance

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ASAHI (Page 15) (Abridged slightly)
May 11, 2006

By Yoichi Kato, Asahi Shimbun American Bureau Chief

The "Morse Target," a pie chart listing prominent American figures wielding significant influence on Japan-US relations, was released in Washington last week.

The figures are classified as "soft" to "hard" toward the center of the concentric circles forming a target-like pie chart. They are also grouped into quadrants labeled as the "Bush Administration," "US Congress," and so on, based on their affiliation (see attachment).

The chart also includes such well-known pro-Japan persons as former US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and former National Security Council Asian Affairs Director Michael Green,

plus President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Of all the persons connected with the US government, President Bush is categorized as the softest toward Japan.

The "Morse Target," mapped out first in 1989 by former UCLA Professor Ronald Morse, 67, known as a revisionist, has been renewed every several years. The target drew much attention as a "must read" at the height of trade friction between Japan and the United States.

I hear that anyone who was labeled as a hardliner was often invited to a lunch at the Japanese Embassy and that many who did not make the chart asked for their listing to be regarded as "important players" or for a change in their position.

But the target released on May 3 did not attract much attention. In fact, only some 20 people, mostly Japan experts, showed up at the conference room of a think tank for the release of this year's target. I understand that many years ago, nearly 100 congressional and government officials packed the conference room. Those days are over. No one came from the Japanese Embassy.

One attendant indicated that the target would make a good discussion material, while another described it meaningless.

Morse ascribes declining interest in the listing of a large number of individuals to the limited number of Japan-US relations players under the Bush administration. Morse took this view:

"In past administrations, 50 to 60% of the individuals who made the chart played important roles in devising policy toward Japan. But the current administration has only five or six main players."

The latest chart, Morse said, is also characterized by a decline in the number of "hard" individuals and an overall shift to "soft." He also described the hollowing out of the central part as "donut phenomenon." Unlike the 1990s, it signifies the absence of sources of dispute between the two countries.

To being with, many think that classifying individuals as "hard" or "soft" no longer holds. One expert noted:

"In recent years, trade friction is limited to such specific

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areas as agriculture and pharmaceuticals. It is no longer possible to classify players base on all counts."

Some think that the prime minister's visit to Yasukuni Shrine is the only issue that deserves classification. This is about the only issue that splits American experts on Japan.

Japan-US relations have drastically changed since the 1990s.

Contrary to Washington's expectations, Iraq's democratization has not progressed. The US is also busy dealing with the Iranian nuclear issue. A dark cloud is also hanging over relations with Russia. Needless to say, forging appropriate relations with a rising China in Asia is a top priority for the US. Given the situation, Japan is a security blanket free from locking horns with the US. It also means that Japan has become a mature ally for the US. Declining interest in the Morse Target in the US symbolically suggests such position of Japan.

(7) Editorial: Action needed over publicity to improve US image

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
May 11, 2006

The popularity of US President Bush and his administration is in the doldrums. The General Accounting Office (GAO), an investigative arm of the US Congress and now renamed the Government Accountability Office, released a report early this month, in which GAO criticized the Department of State's public diplomacy as lacking any strategy. The Bush administration has

laid emphasis on grassroots diplomacy that has mainly targeted the Islamic world. In point of fact, however, the GAO report probably meant to say such diplomacy has failed to achieve noticeable results.

The approval rating for Bush is now down to nearly 30%. His popularity has continued to plummet, with his administration having failed to bring the international community together. Such being the case, it has become increasingly difficult to help Iraq's reconstruction and resolve the issue of Iran's nuclear ambitions. We urge the Bush administration then to seriously consider what it should do to recover its domestic popularity and international credibility. The same goes for the United States' allies, including Japan.

Public diplomacy-unlike state-to-state diplomacy-is intended to work directly on citizens through the media, including publications. After the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on America, the Bush administration named Charlotte Beers, known as the "Queen of Madison Avenue," to the post of undersecretary of State for public diplomacy and public affairs. After her resignation in 2003, the Bush administration appointed one of Bush's aides, Karen Hughes, as its ace.

However, there has been no sign that public diplomacy is making eye-catching changes for the better. In its 2003 and 2005 reports, GAO pointed to the lack of interdepartmental teamwork. The latest report from GAO also reiterated the same point, referring to the lack of foreign service officers with a command of local languages in the Islamic world. GAO suggested the need for the Bush administration to show what the goal is for its public diplomacy. For one thing, its significance is hard to see.

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The Bush administration spent approximately 600 million dollars-equivalent to about 66 billion yen-on its public diplomacy in fiscal 2005. However, the GAO report notes that polls in the Islamic world still show negative feelings about the United States. That is because the Bush administration's way of doing things in public relations might be not good enough. However, publicity alone is not good enough to hope for a big change of mind toward the United States. It is important that the Bush administration should take such a simple fact to heart.

Shortly after the latest GAO report came out, the United Nations Committee against Torture (UNCAT) met in Geneva. UNCAT revealed there that 120 of those detained in camps set up by the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan had died there, and that 29 of them are suspected of having been tortured to death.

In the meantime, the US' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is also alleged to have abducted Arabterror suspects in Europe and tortured them in another country. The European Parliament last month released an interim report admitting to the CIA abductions. The Bush administration has championed freedom and democracy. That notwithstanding, the administration itself has had a hand in the torture and abuse cases. As a result, many Islamic people have died. This fact appears to be a double standard in the eyes of peoples of the Islamic world in particular. In order to erase such an unfavorable image, the United States has no choice but to make steady efforts through daily conduct, not through disseminating public information.

There are a number of points for the United States to reconsider, including its strong patronage of Israel in the Middle East peace process. Right after the terrorist attacks, the American people hated terrorism. At the same time, the Americans also asked themselves why their country was attacked. It is worthwhile for the US government to go back to the starting point and rethink its responses.

(8) Editorial: Tougher diplomacy to stave off Iran crisis urged

Diplomacy toward Iran regarding its nuclear development issue is about to reach a major turning point. A statement issued by the chairman of the UN Security Council urged that nation to end its uranium enrichment activities. However, Iran continues to stand firm in its stance of carrying on with the program. In order to top Iran from going ahead with its nuclear development program and contain rising tensions in the Middle East, the international community must unite and show its willingness to take a tougher diplomatic stance.

The US, Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia during a foreign ministerial meeting held earlier in the week reaffirmed their determination to urge Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. The next step is for the UN Security Council to adopt a similar resolution. However, discord remains between the US and Europe on the one side and China and Russia on the other. The US and Europe want to characterize Iran's nuclear development as a threat to international peace and security and have tried to stipulate in the resolution that it would be based on UN Charter Chapter 7, a step that could pave the way for punitive measures. China and Russia are reluctant to adopt such

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wording, fearing such could lead to the invocation of economic sanctions or military action in the future.

Prolongation of a situation in which leading UN member nations are at odds with each other must be avoided. To begin with, it is important to let Iran know that carrying out such a plan will be of no benefit. US Ambassador to the UN Bolton has referred to the possibility of proposing the imposition of sanctions in a coalition-of-the-willing-type manner against that nation in the event UNSC talks end in failure. However, before proposing such a measure, leading countries should do their utmost to come up with a unified position. It is also essential for China and Russia to rise above their respective economic interests and take a clear stance toward Iran from the perspective of preventing nuclear proliferation.

The Iranian government has announced its determination to carry on with its uranium enrichment program. It has also indicated the possibility of opting out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Supreme Leader Ali Hoseini-Khamenei even stated his intention to transfer Iran's nuclear technology to other countries. This would lead to denying the claim he himself made that Iran's uranium enrichment is for peaceful purpose only. Comments like this only further mount concern already harbored in the international community.

Iran, egged on by its own nationalism, is exaggerating the pressure coming from the US and Europe. On the other hand, the international concern about Iran's nuclear proliferation stemming from its development activities has reportedly yet to trickle down across that nation. It is important to let Iran recognize the situation in an objective way and make a cool-headed judgment, by explaining it that the international community is seriously concerned, that it is risky for Iran to become isolated, and that abandoning the nuclear development program would be to its advantage. Japan is also being put to the test for it, too, must recognize that the resolving the Iran nuclear issue is extremely important for preventing nuclear proliferation. Instead, Japan has been acting from a perspective of which it should choose -- the US or oil. It is regrettable that leading countries' talks are underway without the participation of Japan. The significance of Japan's diplomacy in this regard could be great.

Iranian President Ahmadi-Nejad this week sent a letter to President Bush. The US government noted that the letter had broken no new ground for settling the nuclear issue, but it is a new development between the two countries, which have had no channel for direct dialogue because of the protracted severance of diplomatic relations. Some in the US are beginning to take the view that the US needs to talk directly with Iran. Japan should keep a close watch on efforts to find a breakthrough through such

a new channel.

SCHIEFFER